



(U) Changes in the Senior Executive Service

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Changes include the new the Senior candidate pool and the removal of "levels" for DISES.
(U//FOUO)

(U//FOUO) Some noteworthy changes have been made to NSA's senior executive programs in the last couple of years. For one, NSA has created a "pool" of GS-15 employees who are candidates for appointment to the DISES and DISL* corps. Why? As explained in [DIRgram-350](#), Director Hayden became convinced in 2001 that NSA was understaffed with senior executives, given the increased hiring at the Agency and the demands of the GWOT*. He therefore decided to appoint more seniors, up to the maximum number allowed by the DoD. When this level was reached in October, 2004 -- and the Agency was not authorized to appoint any more seniors -- the Director announced his intention to work with DoD to raise that level to allow additional seniors to be named.

(U//FOUO) So why the pool of candidates? The pool speeds up the process of filling senior vacancies that come about through attrition or from the designation of new "senior positions." This candidate pool is being replenished on an annual basis.

(U//FOUO) Another change that occurred a couple of years ago is that the DoD did away with the DISES system of "levels." Previously, one would start out as a DISES level 1, and could be promoted as high as a DISES level 6, with each level representing a higher grade and higher pay. Now, the rank levels have disappeared, and pay increases are determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director, working with a Performance Review Board (PRB) annually. During 2004, pay adjustments for DISES ranged from 4 to 6 percent.

(U//FOUO) DISLs, by contrast, still operate under the "levels" system, meaning that when a DISL is elevated (through the PRB) to a higher level, he/she will receive the fixed basic pay that goes along with it. The GS work force, of course, is still operating under a similar system, in which pay is determined by grade/step rather than on an individual basis. The DISES are, in effect, already working under a "pay-for-performance" compensation reform program similar to what NSA would like to adopt across the board. (As noted in [DIRgram-332](#), comp reform has been put on hold until changes in the "broader structure" of the Intelligence Community become clear.)

(U) As a follow-up to this article, we hope to interview an individual who was recently elevated from GS-15 to senior executive, to learn how one's responsibilities change as a result of this move. For further info on DISES and DISLs, see an [earlier SIDtoday article](#).

*(U) Notes:

DISES = Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (managers)

DISL = Defense Intelligence Senior Level (technical leaders)

GWOT = Global War on Terrorism

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